

### **Why a Father Should Support His Child**

\*Establishing paternity is the right thing to do! Every father who brings a child into the world should accept his fair share of the financial, legal, and emotional responsibility.

\*A father can experience the reward of contributing to the growth and development of another human being – his child.

\*A father can enjoy a relationship with his child. Through active involvement, the father is often seen by the child as a provider, a role model, and a friend who promotes mutual love and respect.

### **IMPORTANT**

Child support services are available – for free or for a small fee – through your local child support enforcement agency (address and telephone number noted on this brochure). However, you have the option of hiring a private attorney.

Child Support services include locating the father, establishing paternity, obtaining a support order, and collecting child support payments.

*This form adapted from information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – June, 1997.  
cseapamphlet (01/04)*

**LUCAS COUNTY CSEA  
701 ADAMS STREET  
(Across from the County Courthouse)  
TOLEDO, OHIO 43624-2400**

*We are downtown, so there is **NO FREE PARKING.***

**OFFICE HOURS**  
8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.  
Monday, Wednesday & Friday  
7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.  
Tuesday & Thursday  
(Closed Weekends and Legal Holidays)

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Main Number	419-213-3001
Paternity Department	419-213-3191
FAX Number	419-259-3033

### **NOTE**

The Agency *CANNOT* do the following:

- Automatically change/add names on Birth Certificate – YOU MUST REQUEST any changes/additions.
- Visitation rights.
- Custody of children.
- Property settlement matters.
- Collect medical bills.
- Act as your private attorney or represent you outside the scope of its authority.

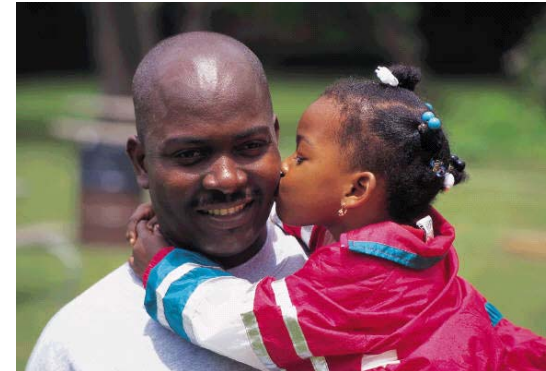
### **What if I Move?**

If you have moved or plan to move, notify the Agency in writing of the change and include your case number, or social security number, with the effective date of the move. Notifying the post office is not sufficient.

## **FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAKE ESTABLISH PATERNITY**

### **What is the CSEA?**

The Lucas County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) was formed on January 1, 1988. The CSEA is the single agency in this county charged with the collection and enforcement of court ordered payments. The Child Support Enforcement Program is a Federal, State and Local effort to collect child support from parents who are legally obligated to pay support. The CSEA is under the direction of the Lucas County Commissioners.



### **What is Paternity?**

Paternity means fatherhood. If parents are married, the husband is considered to be the father of children born during the marriage. If parents are not married, it is important that paternity be *legally* established. Otherwise, the baby has no legal father.



### **Even though we aren't married . . .**

. . .the father of my baby and I are living together.

Does this mean that my child's paternity has been legally established?

The answer is “**NO**”. You and the father must first sign an official form which says you both agree he is the father. A judge or other official will then legally declare him the father.

### **May We Help You?**

The Agency CAN DO the following for you:

- 1) Determine who is the legal father of a child born to unmarried parents. New laws allow the CSEA to do this without going to court.
- 2) Establish an order for support if the parent moves out of the home.
- 3) Locate an absent parent responsible for support.
- 4) Collection and send out support payments.
- 5) Keep accurate records of all payments.
- 6) Enforce an existing order requiring payment of support.
- 7) Review and possibly adjust an existing child support order.
- 8) Obtain a withholding order if the obligor is employed, draws Unemployment Compensation, Worker's Compensation, or has funds available in a bank.
- 9) Take money from Income Tax Returns to collect past due support.

### **Why Establish Paternity?**

**IDENTITY**: All children have the right to know their mother and father.

**MONEY**: Frequently, children supported by only one parent are poorer than children supported by both parents. They need child support. In order to get support, paternity must be legally established.

**MEDICAL**: Your child needs to know if he or she has inherited any special health problems. Also, it might be possible to obtain medical insurance for your child through the father's employer, union, or military service.

**SECURITY**: Fathers who support their children when they are young are more likely to continue to pay support until they become adults. If you wait, the father may decide to deny paternity which could make your child feel unwanted or unloved.

**SURVIVOR'S BENEFITS\***: If the father dies, your child could qualify for a number of benefits, including Social Security, pensions, inheritance rights, veterans benefits, and life insurance.

\*Unless legal paternity has been established, your child may not be able to claim these benefits from his or her father.

### **How is Paternity Established?**

Not all states establish paternity the same way but, in general, there are two ways in which paternity can be established:

1. If the man you name as the father of your child agrees he is the father, he will be asked to sign an official form stating he is the father. In many hospitals and clinics, these forms are available to parents immediately following the birth of their child. This form will be used by a judge or a hearing officer to legally establish paternity. In many states, you do not have to appear in court to establish your child's paternity.
2. If the man you name as the father of your child denies being the father, or if you are unsure of who the father is, blood/genetic tests can be done.

**The results!** Usually a father will admit paternity when results of blood tests show he is the biological father of a child. If the father continues to believe he is not the father, he is entitled to a court hearing on

the matter. At the hearing, a judge listens to both sides and looks at the test results.

### **What Happens After Paternity has been Established?**

You may seek financial support for your child in order to help pay for necessary living expenses. Under the law, your child is entitled to this support.

The *amount* of your monthly child support payment is decided by the laws of the state in which you live. Child support orders require that the father provide financial support for his child until he or she becomes eighteen [(18) or older depending upon state law].

### **How Long After a Child is Born can Paternity be Established?**

Federal law requires states to allow a paternity action to be started anytime before the child reaches the age of eighteen (18) or later depending upon state law.

### **What if the Father is Unemployed or in School?**

Regardless of the father's current situation, his legal responsibility should be established as quickly as possible following your child's birth. His support level (monthly payments) is based on his income level. When the father gets a job, collecting child support will be easier if paternity is already established.

### **Can Paternity be Established Even if the Father Lives in Another State?**

Yes, paternity can be established if the father or your child lives out of state, but it may take more time.

### **Does my Child's Father Have a Right to Visitation?**

Visitation can often be the first step in a healthy relationship between your child and his or her father, although visitation rights are not automatic with the establishment of paternity.

Visitation terms can be arranged informally between you and the father or set by the court. If there is a disagreement, the court would have to settle this matter.